

Business Notices.

HERRING'S SAFES & NORTH CAROLINA—GREAT FIRE AT LENOIR.

FARRER, HERRING & CO., Philadelphia, Pa.
 On the night of the 20th of December, 1860, a fire occurred in our warehouse, destroying the whole portion of the place except two stores. We had one of our "Patent" safes, purchased about one year ago, which contained all the books and papers belonging to the firm, also, the private papers and notes of Mr. Ballard.

From the portion in which the safe stood during the fire, it was ascertained that the safe was not injured, and that the contents were preserved. We have ordered another from your agent.

B. T. BALLARD & CO.
 \$1,000 reward is still offered to any person who can show that Herring's Patent Safe ever failed to preserve its contents in an incendiarious fire. The most reliable security from fire now known, is manufactured only by HERRING & CO., No. 254 Broadway, N. Y.

FARRER, HERRING & CO., Philadelphia.
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WHEELER & WILSON'S IMPROVED SEWING-MACHINES. At reduced prices. Office, No. 505 Broadway.

THE STERLING GAS REGULATOR improves the light and saves gas. Warranted by WHEELER & WILSON SEWING-MACHINE CO. Office, No. 505 Broadway (basement).

TEAR DUCT, CLOSED TWO YEARS. Cured by SMITH'S MAGNETIC SALVE. Mrs. A. D. How, No. 2 Kingst. For sale by the proprietor, No. 372 Canal St. Wells & Co., New York.

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BATCHELOR'S HAIR DYE.—Reliable, Harmless, and Instantaneous. Black or Brown. Factory, No. 61 Barclay Street and applied at BATCHELOR'S Wig Factory, No. 10 Bond Street.

MRS. VICTOR, in her inimitable "Miss Simmona" Papers, proved herself to be the best living humorist writer on this side of the Atlantic; as a romance writer she is considered to have no superior. In "Uncle Ezekiel" she has brought her best powers as a humorist and novelist into play; and the result is such a book as will make laugh and talk from Maine to Texas.

"UNCLE EZEKIEL, and his Exploits on Two Continents," issues from BRADLEY'S Dime Publishing House. The publishers are making good their pledges to the public, in supplying the long existing want of a cheap, pure, and strictly popular literature, which shall embrace the best works by the best authors. Each of the publications of this House is retailed at the uniform price of ten cents.

TO CORRESPONDENTS. No notice can be taken of Anonymous Communications. What is intended for insertion must be authenticated by the name and address of the writer—necessarily for publication. But as a guarantee for good faith.

All business letters for this office should be addressed, as "THE TRIBUNE," New York.

We cannot undertake to return rejected Communications.

The Tribune for California. Will be ready at 9 o'clock this morning. It will contain the Money and Market Reports, Marriages and Deaths, and all the latest important Foreign and Domestic News since the sailing of the last steamer.

The steamer Ariel will leave to-day at 12 o'clock. The mails close at 10 o'clock, a.m. Single copies, in wrappers, ready for mailing, for sale at the counter.

The Governor of Pennsylvania has appointed seven Commissioners to the Border-State Conference, at Washington, on Monday next.

We have positive information from Springfield by which we feel ourselves authorized to contradict the rumor that Mr. Cameron has been or is to be re-elected to a seat in Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet.

The Pony Express brings California dates to Jan. 12. There had been a protracted struggle for Speaker of the House, and no election had been made when the Express left. It is said that there is an overwhelming majority in the Legislature for maintaining the Union.

In the Court of General Sessions yesterday, Judge J. J. Wood presented in which it was alleged that Mayor Wood's recent message, said, alluding to the recently published "Papers of the highest executive officer of this city, we look upon as being too well calculated to pander to the worst passions of dangerous combinations of persons in our midst, by no means inconsiderable in point of numbers, and at times exhibiting riotous profligacy."

The Republican Central Committee of this city, at its meeting on Wednesday night, passed resolutions thanking Mr. Van Wyck for his manly speech in Congress the other day, and earnestly requesting the Republican members of Congress in no manner, come what may, to further compromise with the Slave Power. The Committee in this resolution speak unmistakably the sentiments of the Republicans of New-York City. They all desire a real settlement upon the maintenance of the Union and the Enforcement of the Laws, and no cowardly and temporary compromise.

Five members of the Joint Committee of our State Legislature yesterday presented a report in favor of appointing Commissioners to participate in the Virginia Conference at Washington on the 4th of February, and appointing David Dudley Field, William Curtis Noyes, James S. Wadsworth, James C. Smith, Amariah B. James, Erasmus Corning, Addison Gardner, Greene C. Bronson, and William E. Dodge to the office. Mr. Bingham of Troy and Mr. J. McLeod Murphy of New-York presented a minority report opposing the appointment of such a Commission, on the ground that the proposed Conference is not called by any legitimate authority, and can have no legal power. The subject is to be considered in the Legislature this evening.

We copy to-day, from The Newark Advertiser, two very interesting and remarkable letters, one of them written from Charleston more than a year ago, to a mercantile house in Paris, advising them of the approaching formation of a Southern Confederacy, and pointing out the supposed advantages to France of such a step. This letter proves that rebellion was plotted long before the election, and even before the nomination of Mr. Lincoln. The second letter is dated Nov. 13, 1860, and declares that "a great day is coming for France," from the Southern wonders to be worked by the secession of South Carolina. Champagne and Cognac are to supercede corn whisky, we suppose, and every darkey in the new Confederacy, and even the poorest of

the white trash, is expected to sport at least a pair of kid gloves.

The Board of Councilmen were without a quorum last evening. In the Board of Aldermen, some patriotic resolutions, providing for the reception of Mr. President Lincoln by the Corporation, were voted down, because the mover would not agree with Boole to make his coming either an excuse for another Japanese junketing. Mr. Boole, however, denies that he is opposed to extending courtesies to Mr. Lincoln, and asserts that the resolutions would have passed but for the course of Mr. Dayton. The expediency of constructing stone piers was broached, and it was resolved to ask the Legislature for authority to obtain the necessary funds. A proposition from Mr. Boole to repair Pier No. 52, North River, for \$9,000, without contract, was laid over. It appears that part of the work has already been done.

Is it true that a third party is arising in our politics, to be called the Concession Party? If there is to be such a party, and it is certainly not impossible, it will aim, no doubt, to hold a middle position between the Republican and Democratic parties, but must, in the nature of the case, direct its efforts to destroy the first and give aid and comfort to the second. For our part, we propose still to remain faithful to the doctrines of the platform, and likewise to the spirit of the Republican Union. We go with ABRAHAM LINCOLN, for the Union, the Constitution, and the enforcement of the Laws; and with SALMON P. CHASE, who says that his motto is "Inauguration first, Adjustment afterward," and with HENRY CLAY, who said that "no earthly power could induce him to vote for a specific measure for the introduction of Slavery where it had not before existed." No matter how large or how small the Concession party may prove to be, we shall endeavor still to follow the Republican flag, and contend for Republican principles.

MR. SEWARD'S SECOND SPEECH.

Mr. Seward yesterday presented a petition to the Senate of the United States, signed by 35,000 inhabitants of this city, praying that Congress would exercise its wisdom in finding some mode of adjustment of our present national difficulties. The special committee of the projectors of this petition accompanied it with some resolutions in which they recommend as a basis of adjustment the propositions known as the Border State plan, contemplating certain acts of legislation and amendments to the Constitution of a Pro-Slavery character.

Mr. Seward, after presenting the petition, addressed the Senate at considerable length. He remarked that the Committee in charge of the memorial are a fair representation, almost an embodiment, of the citizens who direct and wield the commerce of New-York, "the commerce of a continent, and a commerce which this present year, owing to the distractions of the times, is put for the first time in a condition of proving itself to be the controlling commerce of the world." He remarked also that the memorial presented by this Committee might be regarded as a fair expression of the interest which is felt by our commercial community in the great question of the Union.

In this last remark Mr. Seward evidently only meant to say that the memorial fairly presents the desire of our business men for a peaceful adjustment of the secession question without at the same time indicating the exact mode in which an adjustment could be made satisfactorily to all the signers of the petition. There exists undoubtedly in this city, and in fact in all parts of the loyal States, a sincere desire for a peaceful, and at the same time an honorable settlement of the questions at issue between the South and the Government of the United States. But while this wish for a peaceful settlement is strong and universal, on the question of the details of such a settlement the widest diversity of opinion and feeling exists. Even among the petitioners from this city it is certain that not one man in ten has yet made up his mind as to how far he is prepared to go in making concessions or in refusing concessions. It may safely be said that not one in a hundred has a definite idea of what are called the Border States propositions and we venture to predict that when these propositions come to be fairly understood and fully discussed by the people, there will be found even in this city, eager as it naturally and reasonably is for peace, an overwhelming majority against them. When it is generally known, as it cannot fail soon to be, that these propositions demand concessions tenfold greater than were ever before made to the slaveholders, that they demand pro-Slavery amendments to the Constitution which no one dreamed of proposing when that instrument was formed, and the least of which would have secured its instant and indignant rejection by our fathers, it will be found, we think, that there is some public spirit, some political foresight, and some love of liberty yet alive among men of all parties. What the course of the 30,000 Republicans of the city will be on such a question is sufficiently foreshadowed by the recent resolutions of the Republican General Committee, protesting against all further compromise with Slavery.

In alluding to the great commercial interest represented by the New-York memorial, Mr. Seward remarked, that in other countries, such a demonstration would command obedience from the Government, but significantly added, that in this Republic, such was happily not the case. Here the commercial interest was but one of many—the agricultural, the manufacturing, the mining, being equally potential, and entitled to consideration. It is perhaps even more significant, that Mr. Seward, while commending the merchants of New-York for their spirit of conciliation and fraternal kindness, should recommend them as he does in this speech, to manifest their devotion for the Union, not only by speaking for it, by voting for it, by giving money for it, but also by fighting for it, if fighting should become advisable. Nevertheless, Mr. Seward, in spite of this significant hint, holds to his expectation of a bloodless termination of the crisis, and to the ultimate safety of "this great fabric of constitutional liberty and empire." A Convention of the people, called according to the forms of the Constitution, and acting in the manner prescribed by it, he thinks will give the country relief by the prompt adoption of measures which will show to the world how well and wisely a great, enlightened, educated, and Christian people can adjust difficulties apparently insurmountable. Notwithstanding these pacific expressions, and the general moderation and conciliatory tone of Mr. Seward's speech, his remark about fighting for

the Union aroused the wrath of Mr. Mason of Virginia, who, in his usual arrogant manner, declared that Mr. Seward's speech meant neither more nor less than battle, and that his "honored State" was ready for the fight, and was not to be deluded by silly propositions to amend the Constitution. Mr. Seward replied with force and spirit, vindicating his position and defending the rights and power of the Union. The debate was continued with unusual animation and great length, Mr. Hale, Mr. Douglas, and the irrepressible Wigfall of Texas, taking part in it.

NEGRO PLOTS.

Columbia, S. C., is just now enjoying one of the predicted results of secession and civil war, in the shape of a plot, real or apprehended, on the part of the slaves. A dispatch from that city says:

"This plot was exposed by one of the negroes, and a white slave-cutter, who is to be hung as soon as examined, and all possible testimony elicited. The event has created a good deal of alarm among the inhabitants, and especially among the women upon the plantations."

The white slave-cutter, whose pending fate is thus coolly foreshadowed, without any of those little formalities of Judge and Jury which are deemed essential in other parts of the world to the proprieties of hanging, is doubtless a Northern man, for of course no genuine Southerner ever degrades himself by cutting down, except on compulsion and when he has the misfortune to be detained in some public institution like that at Sing Sing. We presume and hope that the alleged plot is altogether imaginary, but in such a society as that of South Carolina, the bare apprehension of insurrection is a dire calamity from the horrible alarm it creates in every household. The condition of a slaveholding community, in such a state of fear, can scarcely be conceived by those accustomed only to the peace and security of free and civilized States. Jefferson and John Randolph long ago depicted it in language whose vivid and terrible eloquence has become classic in our literature. Those who have witnessed such a crisis are well aware that its nature is feebly expressed by the trite comparison of sleeping on a volcano or in a powder magazine. Its horrors fall with peculiar severity on those least able to endure them, on women, and on the sick, the nervous and the timid. Columbia, at this moment, is, as it were, in a state of siege. The fighting men have gone to Charleston to attack Fort Sumter, and for some weeks past, as we learn from private letters, a latent dread of the negroes has forced the few able-bodied men remaining in the town to arm themselves, and turn out at night to patrol the streets. This state of things must, of course, go on increasing in intensity so long as the present troubles continue. The warlike and rebellious spirit cannot long agitate the whites without producing a corresponding and sympathetic movement among the blacks. If the one race rises in arms for "liberty," how can the other be expected to remain passive? The danger becomes infinitely greater from the fact, which the negro cannot fail soon to learn, that when his master talks about fighting for "liberty" he means Slavery, and that the contest is really about him and his right to Freedom.

The debate in the State Assembly on Wednesday upon the Robinson resolutions brought out Mr. Hutchins of New-York, a Democratic member from the XIVth District. Mr. H. made one of the stock speeches of the period, in which Charles II., Cromwell, Rome, George III., all took an appropriate part. There was nothing worthy of remark in this, so far; but in his peroration Mr. Hutchins appealed to the House "in behalf of the loaded warehouses of New-York, the merchant ships rotting at the wharves, the streets in which grass was beginning to grow, and also to the tenantry of the population generally, most of whom he represented as in a starving condition. The original boldness and boldness of these views may naturally cause some to inquire with interest who Mr. Hutchins is. Referring to a favorably drawn sketch published just before the election, we are not surprised to learn that he is "a young man, recently graduated at Columbia College," or that he is "a novice in politics." We read without especial interest that he is 21 years of age, having "a smooth, fair face, free from the appearance of care or anxiety," and that he has spent several years abroad. With astonishment we discover that he is "a person of good education," with commiseration for the reading public that he once "corresponded with a weekly paper," and with apathy that he "has the support of the men of social standing" in his district. It would be too cruel to forbid all play to the brilliant imagination of Mr. Hutchins, and he shall be allowed to have his "loaded warehouses;" he may even enjoy his picture of the "merchant ships rotting at the wharves;" but we do positively object to his rushing the season—if he will permit the unpolished phrase—so far as to make the grass grow in our streets at this inclement period. This flower of speech is a little too forward to be put forth in the rural district of Albany. When one reads of Mr. Hutchins's face, "free from the appearance of care," and compares the phrase with his reported remarks, one cannot help thinking that several words ought to have been saved by calling it a vacant countenance at once. If, as we have not seldom heard, he who causes two blades to spring where was only one before is to be rewarded, what guerdon too magnificent for Mr. Hutchins, at whose bidding a full crop of grass grows in the ice-bound streets of the metropolis? Perhaps a hardly commensurate reward, but yet one most appropriate, would be to present to him for his season's fodder the hay which might be made from this untimely growth. One thing is fortunate: there will not be enough to make two bundles, and Mr. Hutchins will not be obliged to go hungry between them. However strong the support of these men "of social standing" may be it will be well for the recent graduate of Columbia College to bridle his tongue; lest, making one too many of his characteristic speeches, his constituents turn him forth to graze in his own field, thereby literally leaving him "out in the cold."

An eminent Englishman, writing to a friend in this city, concludes his letter as follows:

"It seems strange not to be writing one word on your great question. Our fears here are for the honor of your Northern States, that no discreditable compromise will be entered into. We can't understand why the separation of the Slave States should be so fearful to you as some seem to say."

There is sound judgment in every word of this. There can be no doubt that the adoption of a "discreditable compromise" would be a thousand times worse for the American people, worse for Freedom and orderly social progress, worse for

the permanent peace and prosperity of the country, than the disruption of the Union. In truth there is neither safety nor honor in compromise; there is safety in nothing but holding to the Constitution, and the Enforcement of the Laws.

In 1858, when we were all rejoicing over the Atlantic Telegraph, The Richmond South, a journal of the seceding school, derived great satisfaction from the indifference of Southerners to that event, and proved it to be an evidence of their superiority. We quote a few sentences from this pharisaic disposition:

"The people of the Southern States are as deeply interested in this triumph as are those of New-York, and appreciate the greatness of the achievement. Why, then, are they not more excited, more enthusiastic? How is it that they have given no outward visible expression of their interest and joyfulness? It is because they are less superficial, less noisy, less demonstrative, less extensible than their Northern brethren. There is less of the mob element in Southern society, and that is the element which exhibits these stunts of intoxication. An intense conservatism, a predominant peculiarity of Southern character, and it is just that conservatism of stability which free society lacks to preserve it from those violent popular ebullitions which now swell into a hurricane of plausible and innocent excitement when the Atlantic Cable is laid, and which to-morrow may sweep away every barrier of good order and good government, when baser passions stir and more the multitude. Northern society is a sleeping volcano, but with powerful fire forces raging internally and ready to burst forth in devouring and consuming flames with out a moment's notice."

How is it now with the superiority of Southern society, its conservatism, its stability, its freedom from the baser passions which sweep away good order and good government?

THE LATEST NEWS.

RECEIVED BY MAGNETIC TELEGRAPH.

From Washington.

WASHINGTON, Thursday, Jan. 31, 1861.

THE DEBATE IN THE SENATE.

The debate in the Senate to-day was good-natured and significant, with the exception of the part borne by Mr. Mason, who showed the cloven hoof. Mr. Hale's speech was one of those fragmentary efforts of his, for which he is remarkable, and which, while indicative of great power, are also indicative of great laziness. It was attentively listened to, and warmly commended, as it deserved. Mr. Mason pounced upon Mr. Seward with great malevolence for saying that, at the last we must fight for the Union if we can do no better. Mr. Mason made a great handle of the declaration, with a view to influence the pending Virginia election. He is a determined secessionist. Mr. Douglas declared warmly for the Union, and so did Mr. Wigfall, who gave a fresh specimen of his unique argumentation. Clearly, Mr. Wigfall thinks the way to save the Union is to rub it out and begin again. He has evidently lost his stomach for staying away from the Senate. Indeed, it is evident that every seceding rascal, who has left Congress, or who intends to leave it, wishes himself safely back again.

Count Gutowski has arrived in the city.

WASHINGTON, Thursday, Jan. 31, 1861.

FORT PICKENS.

From the best authority I learn that dispatches went from the Disunionists here to-day to Alabama that Fort Pickens must be stormed; that the only way to insure a secession triumph in Virginia, was to precipitate the actual conflict.

THE SEIZURE OF THE CAPITAL.

It admits of little doubt that plottings to seize the Departments and the Capitol at night have been on foot, and are still continued, despite the increase of troops here. Persons of higher rank than Government Clerks are involved in it. It is said that at one time the 12th or 13th of February was fixed on.

THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THIRTY-THREE.

The debate on the report of the Committee of Thirty-three will close about next Wednesday.

FORT SUMTER'S SUPPLIES.

Notwithstanding the repeated assurances given the President and many others by Col. Hayne, the Special Envoy of Gov. Pickens, that the garrison at Fort Sumter was regularly supplied with provisions, and had free communication with Charleston, Maj. Anderson's official correspondence explicitly contradicts these declarations. Gov. Pickens did propose to furnish him from the State Commissariat, but Maj. Anderson necessarily declined that offer, as one calculated, if not intended, to compromise him by establishing relations which he was forbidden by his position to recognize. Supposing that the authorities really intended to relax the surveillance which had been previously practiced, he wrote to the contractor who supplied his command when at Fort Moultrie, requesting that provisions should be sent as formerly. No answer was received, and Major Anderson has not obtained a single pound of fresh beef or anything else from the city. His garrison is subsisting upon the same hard and salt rations as heretofore, which are diminishing at a rate which must demand replenishment before long. Col. Hayne was doubtless misled in making these representations, which are wholly inconsistent with facts that must have been known to Gov. Pickens when they were communicated to him. Maj. Anderson expresses himself satisfied with the manner in which his correspondence is received. The authorities offered to give his messenger access to the Post-Office, but fearing difficulty, he preferred the safer mode which is now adopted, and by means of which he maintains daily communication with the War Department. He denies all the reports alleging disaffection or mutiny among his force, and also the recent statement that a boat from Fort Sumter had been fired into, as wholly unfounded. His men are devoted to him, and faithful to the Union.

THE MACEDONIAN AND BROOKLYN.

The Macedonian and Brooklyn will be in a position, near Fort Pickens, to sweep the island, and to command the other forts now held by the Revolutionists. In view of the approaching Conference here on Feb. 4, it was determined, with the approbation of Gen. Scott, not to land the troops they carried, unless an attack was menaced on Fort Pickens. At the first signal of such demonstration, the orders are to reinforce Col. Sumner's garrison, and open on the assailants. Provisions are to be landed immediately. No assault is apprehended, notwithstanding Col. Chase's belligerent bulletins.

FORT JEFFERSON.

Tortuga was strengthened just in time, as an organization had been perfected in New-Orleans to seize the fort, and was about embarking when the transports arrived. Capt. Meigs writes that his position perfectly secure, and he can hold it against any probable assault. Reinforcements

have, however, been ordered from Texas, to make an assurance doubly sure.

MR. ADAMS'S SPEECH.

Mr. Adams made a remarkable speech to-day in defense of his action in the Committee of Thirty-three, which attracted unusual attention from both sides, and filled the galleries in every part. It was marked by all his strongest characteristics of ability, thought and research. He examined the differences which divided the contrary, and the various propositions which had been presented to him, justifying his own as involving no surrender of Republican principle, and only carrying out existing laws and obligations. The argument was forcible and convincing, and made considerable impression on many who had been disinclined to this policy.

The Border States men expressed great satisfaction with the general tone and spirit of the speech, though they desired larger concessions.

MORE RE-ENFORCEMENTS FOR WASHINGTON.

Another company of flying artillery has been ordered here, which, with the regular force already collected, is considered sufficient for all the purposes of defense, independent of the militia, which could be called out, and a large body of volunteers ready for any emergency that may threaten. The conspirators are quite disheartened at these preparations. They dislike grape and canister.

THE REVENUE CUTTERS.

When Gen. Dix entered office he took immediate precautions to save the revenue cutters in the South from being seized or betrayed by secessionists as far as practicable. Orders were sent that the one under repairs at Galveston should be blown up in case it could not be successfully defended, if attacked. Instructions concerning the Robert McLellan, which is under the control of the Collector at New-Orleans, and one of the finest in the service, may prevent its seizure and treasonable conversion against the Government.

THE NEW-YORK COMPROMISE.

The presentation of the great New-York compromise memorial by Mr. Seward led to a protracted discussion, which consumed the whole day in the Senate. Mr. Wigfall entertained the audience with one of his peculiar performances, in which he repeatedly announced the terms upon which the seceding States would return to the Union, showing clearly that this was their design in going out. He charges that Mr. Douglas's great principle of non-intervention had first dissolved the Democratic party, and now dissolved the Union. Speaking of the recognition of Slavery by the Constitution, he contended, that the extension of the African slave-trade to 1808 was an admission of the right to buy and sell the souls of men and women. This atrocious sentiment shocked the crowded galleries, but Wigfall seemed unconscious of having uttered anything but a sublime idea. He said the South would remain in the Union if property in man was recognized, but not otherwise.

THE BORDER STATES.

A conference of the delegations from the border States was held in the reception-room of the House, at the request of the New-York Committee of capitalists and merchants. Mr. Dodge addressed them briefly, and said the Republicans would not accept the Crittenden Compromise, and therefore it must be abandoned for some more practicable proposition which did not require surrender of principle at their hands. Several members from the border States expressed a disposition to adjust on a basis of Mr. Corwin's report, with modifications; and Mr. Rust exhibited a more conciliatory disposition than his recent speech indicated. This meeting manifested some real purpose to relinquish exorbitant demands, and approach the question more fairly than any yet held.

WASHINGTON, Thursday, Jan. 31, 1861.

The steamer Brooklyn has probably joined the Macedonian at Pensacola. Should an attack be made on Fort Pickens, which is not now improvable within a short time, considering the advice of parties distant from the scene, those vessels will cooperate with Lieut. Sumner in its defense, although it is supposed here he would be able successfully to maintain his position here without additional support.

It appears from an official source that on the 27th of January Mr. Schleiden wrote to Secretary of State Black, informing him that he had received a letter from the Bremen Consulate at Charleston stating that the consignee of the Copernicus had tendered the duties at the Custom-House, which were refused; and from this the Consul infers that the functionaries there are acting no longer for us. The Minister, therefore, asks how are the Bremen captains and consignees of goods imported from Bremen in Bremen vessels into the ports of South Carolina to act in order to avoid all violations of the revenue laws of the United States. Does the Government now stored, or which may hereafter be placed in United States bonded warehouses at Charleston? And United States bonded warehouses at Charleston? In case of a discontinuance of the United States Custom-House at Charleston will Bremen vessels be permitted to proceed hence on the voyage without hindrance on the part of the United States authorities?

Lord Lyons, Dec. 31, acquiesces in the fact that he has received a letter from the British Consul at Charleston, in which it is stated that South Carolina has passed an ordinance declaring, in effect, that the Custom-Houses of the United States in South Carolina are converted into Custom-Houses of that State, and the revenue laws adopted show that the duties are to be collected on the articles of that State. The Consul asks that several practical difficulties connected with the entry and clearance of British vessels which may arrive at any moment. Lord Lyons requests the Government to furnish him without delay such information respecting its wishes and intentions as may enable him to give definite instructions to the Consul, and to remove any apprehension which may exist that the abolition of the *de facto* United States Custom-Houses will be allowed to subject British vessels for commerce to loss, injury or inconvenience.

Tasara, the Spanish Minister, Dec. 31, calls Secretary Black's attention to a letter from the Spanish Consul at Charleston, relative to the customs matter at that city.

The Secretary is informed by Lord Lyons that the South Carolina authorities have removed the buoys, withdrawn the light ship, &c., and requests that the lights and beacons be replaced, or some means adopted to warn vessels of their danger; and in conclusion desires such information as will allay the anxiety of British subjects.

Mr. Schleiden also complains, January 8, that the lights in the Charleston harbor have been extinguished. Among the documents is a letter from Judge Magrath, dated Executive Department, saying the active efforts of the pilots will prevent any serious injury or inconvenience to commerce.

On the 10th inst., Secretary Black replied to Lord Lyons, and sent a copy of his letter to Messrs. Schleiden and Tasara. He says he had Lord Lyons's communication before the President, who would deeply regret that any injury should happen to the commerce of foreign nations, and especially that the British subject at Charleston should suffer by the anomalous state of things existing there. Secretary Black quotes from the law to show the jurisdiction of the Federal Government to impose duties on goods imported into the United States, and collects the duties, is exclusive. Whether the state of things now existing at Charleston will, or will not, be regarded as a sufficient reason for not executing the penalties incurred by the British subjects, is a question Lord Lyons will see no necessity raising until it practically arises. Each case will no doubt have its peculiarities. Secretary Black regrets that the consular commission he is declining giving to the consular authorities on the point presented. The Treasury Department, he says, will give public information as to the condition in which South Carolina has put the Coast.

The Select Committee of Five have examined about twelve witnesses in the alleged conspiracy to seize the

Federal Capitol. Lieutenant-General Scott was before them more than two hours to-day. He said there was abundant evidence, to his mind, to justify him in making military preparations, though it was not of the strongest character.

The bill reported yesterday from that Committee, providing for calling out the volunteers, did not meet the concurrence of that branch.

John C. Calhoun, authorizing the President to suspend by proclamation, the Revenue law, when obstructed by illegal combinations, met the approval of all Mr. Branch excepted.

Capt. Randolph is the only naval officer of that rank who has resigned, and he was on the reserved list. His resignation was accepted before information reached the Department of the surrender of the Pensacola Navy-Yard.

More care is now taken than heretofore by both the Navy and War Departments to prevent their secret or private orders from obtaining premature publicity, which has, on several occasions, frustrated the designs of the Administration, to the great detriment of the public interest.

Applications continue to be received here from Postmasters in the seceded States, for supplies of postage stamps, blanks, wrapping paper, etc., but these are furnished on the condition that the Postmasters will acknowledge and conform to the laws affecting the postal service.

The Secretary of State has declined to admit that the secession authorities in possession of the consular papers have any power to grant clearances or receive payments of duties. In a letter to Lord Lyons he has defined the position of this Government, and declares that the revenue laws will be regarded as in full operation.

The Hon. T. J. Judge, the Alabama Commissioner, to arrange the Property question, has arrived here, and is in conference with the Virginia Commissioner, Col. Hayne, and others.

From Springfield.

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., Thursday, Jan. 31, 1861. A report from Washington, that Mr. Lincoln had written to Schuyler Colfax and other Republican Congressmen, urging the passage of compromise measures, is authoritatively contradicted.

Judge Betts made a speech last night before a Republican caucus. He expressed himself strongly against secession, but did not commit himself on any of the compromise propositions, and disclaimed to speak for Mr. Lincoln.

Governor Yates is not absolutely opposed to the appointment of Commissioners in response to the Virginia invitation, but objects to their meeting before Mr. Lincoln's inauguration. This is known to be the view of the President elect. There is a good deal of agitation on the subject in the Legislature, and Commissioners may yet be appointed.

Joseph A. Nunes of San Francisco was here to-day to see the President.

The following dispatch shows Mr. Lincoln's movements:

CHARLESTON, Ill., Thursday, Jan. 31—3 p.m. "The President elect arrived last night, and left early this morning for the residence of his step-mother."

Massachusetts Legislature.

BOSTON, Thursday, Jan. 31, 1861.

In the Senate the Committee on Federal Relations, to whom was referred the Virginia resolutions, proposing a Convention at Washington, presented majority and minority reports. The former dissenting from the method proposed by Virginia, but is willing to compare opinions with loyal States in an effort to strengthen the Union and promote tranquillity, and authorizes the Governor to appoint five Commissioners, subject to the control of the Legislature. Both were laid on the table.

In the House a resolve was introduced tendering the hospitalities of the State to the President elect, and inviting him to visit this city prior to the inauguration.

Excitement in Richmond.

RICHMOND, Thursday, Jan. 31, 1861.

The following dispatch has been received by Judge Hopkins, a member of the House of Delegates, from the Hon. John S. Preston:

"To Judge Hopkins, House of Delegates, Richmond, Va. 'Reinforcements are ordered to Fort Sumter and elsewhere. Will not Virginia, by the Legislature, interpose to prevent coercion? It will be too late when her Convention meets.' J. S. PRESTON."

This dispatch has caused considerable excitement here.

New-Jersey Legislature.

TRENTON, Thursday, Jan. 31, 1861.

The Senate to-day confirmed the nomination of W. T. Bonta, Prosecutor for Bergen and Henry O. Wynton, Prosecutor for Sussex County.</